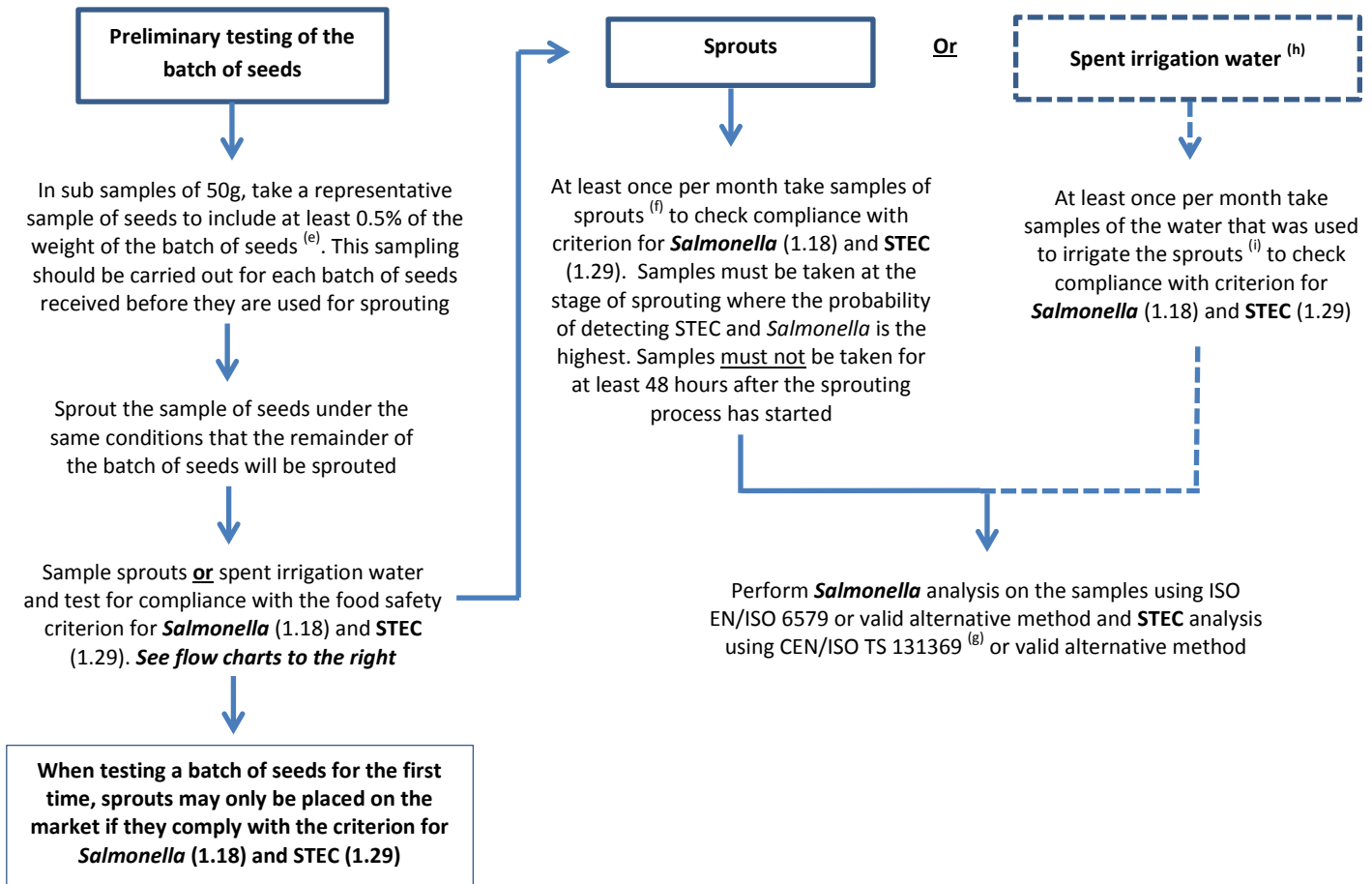


## Sampling rules and frequencies for sprouts set in Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005, as amended <sup>(a)</sup>

**Relevant food safety criteria** <sup>(b)</sup>: **1.18** (*Salmonella* spp.) and **1.29** (STEC O157, O26, O111, O103, O145 and O104:H4)

Food business operators that produce sprouts must carry out a preliminary testing of every batch <sup>(c)</sup> of seeds they receive <sup>(d)</sup>. They must also carry out testing of sprouts at least once per month.



<sup>(a)</sup> These sampling rules do not apply to sprouts that will receive a heat treatment effective to eliminate *Salmonella* spp. and Shiga toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC)

<sup>(b)</sup> Sprouts are ready-to-eat and must comply with the food safety criterion for *Listeria monocytogenes* (food category 1.2 or 1.3) and include the sampling of processing areas and equipment as part of their sampling scheme [Commission Regulation (EU) No 209/2013 (preamble 13). Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005, however, does not prescribe a set frequency for *L. monocytogenes* sampling and testing of sprouts or for sampling of the processing area and equipment. The food business operator must decide the appropriate sampling frequency based on a risk assessment

<sup>(c)</sup> According to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 208/2013, a 'batch' means a quantity of sprouts or seeds intended for the production of sprouts, with the same taxonomic name, which is dispatched from the same establishment to the same destination on the same day. One or more batches can make up a consignment. However, seeds with a different taxonomic name, which are mixed in the same packaging and intended to be germinated together and sprouts thereof are also considered as one batch

<sup>(d)</sup> Food business operators may be exempt from the preliminary testing of all batches of seeds provided that the competent authority is satisfied that the food business operator implements a food safety management system in that establishment, which may include steps in the production process, which reduces microbiological risk; and historical data confirms that during at least 6 consecutive months prior to granting the authorisation, all batches of the different types of sprouts produced in the establishment comply with the food safety criteria 1.18 and 1.29

<sup>(e)</sup> Food business operators may use an alternative sampling strategy so long as it is structured, statistically equivalent and has been verified by the competent authority

<sup>(f)</sup> Ensure that the laboratory is provided with sufficient sample to test against both the *Salmonella* and STEC criterion. n=5 for both criteria and for each sub-unit, 25 g of sprouts must be tested

<sup>(g)</sup> Taking into account the most recent adaption by the European Union reference laboratory for *Escherichia coli*, including verotoxigenic *E. coli* (VTEC), for the detection of STEC O104:H4

<sup>(h)</sup> Food business operators may replace sampling sprouts with sampling spent irrigation water if they have a sampling plan, including sampling procedures and sampling points of the spent irrigation water

<sup>(i)</sup> Ensure that the laboratory is provided with sufficient spent irrigation water to test against both the *Salmonella* and STEC criterion. n=5 for both criteria and for each sub-unit, 200 ml of spent irrigation water must be tested